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CCO 1754.2  
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COMBAT CENTER ORDER 1754.2

From: Commanding General  
To: Distribution List

Subj: CHILDREN IN SELF CARE

1. Purpose. The purpose of this Order is to establish standardize guidelines concerning the minimum age at which children may be left in "self care". This guidance is presented in the context that parents are responsible and accountable for their children at all times.

2. Background

a. Questions concerning the appropriate age at which a child may be left in self care often arises, frequently as the result of an allegation of child neglect or improper parenting.

b. There are no set standards established by the Department of Defense. Standards in civilian communities vary based upon local regulations. The state of California has no age directed requirements.

3. Definitions

a. Baby-sitting. An agreement to care for another's children on an occasional basis, defined as less than 10 child care hours per week, either in the sitter's or the child's home.

b. Parent. The biological father or mother is responsible of a child, a person who, by order of a court of competent jurisdiction, has been declared the father or mother of a child by adoption; the legal guardian of a child; or a person in whose household a child resides, provided that such a person stands in loco parentis to that child and contributes at least one-half of the child's support.

c. Self Care. Care when the child is responsible for himself or herself and generally includes children who are responsible for themselves before or after school, during school vacations, and holidays. Sometimes referred to as latchkey children, because these children let themselves into their own homes.

4. Policy

a. Parents are responsible and accountable for their children at all times. Parents, guardian or designated caretakers of children are expected to have full accountability of their children to ensure they are safe and not left without direct accountable adult supervision, age appropriate, for any period of time. This includes such situations as being unattended in quarters, left alone overnight, participation in self-release programs, unattended in vehicles, and unattended on playgrounds.

b. Parents must consider several important variables, in addition to age, before deciding their children can safely be left in self care. The factors include: maturity of the child; duration and frequency of time without direct

supervision, child's knowledge of emergency procedures; presence of physically and emotionally handicapped conditions accessibility to parent or other specified or informed caretaker; number and ages of other children present without direct adult supervision; age-appropriateness of responsibilities given to the child; and specific nature of ongoing child activities while unsupervised.

c. The following chart outlines the minimum ages, based on developmental standards and the factors addressed above, that may be left in self care under certain circumstances.

| AGE   | UNATTENDED<br>IN QUARTERS | LEFT ALONE<br>OVERNIGHT | PLAYGROUND<br>UNATTENDED | SELF-<br>RELEASE<br>YOUTH<br>CENTER | CAR<br>UNATTENDED | BABY-SIT<br>SIBLINGS | BABY-SIT<br>OTHERS |
|-------|---------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| 0-9   | NO                        | NO                      | NO                       | NO                                  | NO                | NO                   | NO                 |
| 10-11 | NO                        | NO                      | YES                      | YES                                 | YES               | NO                   | NO                 |
| 12-13 | YES                       | NO                      | YES                      | YES                                 | YES               | YES*                 | YES*               |
| 14-15 | YES                       | NO                      | YES                      | YES                                 | YES               | YES*                 | YES*               |
| 16-18 | YES                       | YES                     | YES                      | YES                                 | YES               | YES                  | YES                |

\*NO OVERNIGHT

d. All children in self care should receive self care instruction to include emergency procedures and phone numbers.

e. Children baby-sitting other children are strongly encouraged to first complete the American Red Cross baby-sitter's course.

5. Applicability. This Order is applicable to all service members, family members, and DoD civilians residing in government housing and utilizing Combat Center Facilities.

J. D. MAJCHRZAK  
Chief of Staff

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